

## ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY AMBASSADOR OLE EGBERG MIKKELSEN

International Diplomacy Award of the "Person of the Year – 2024"

*Kyiv, 31 of May, 2025*

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues and friends,

I am deeply honoured to receive this prestigious award.

I am also humbled. Because I know that this award is not for me personally. I receive as Denmark's envoy but it is primarily a recognition of the strong Danish-Ukrainian partnership that has evolved since the full-scale Russian aggression.

Denmark is one of Ukraine's strongest supporters. In per capita terms we are probably the biggest. When I am asked what Denmark does in Ukraine, I often say: We do three things: weapons, weapons, and weapons.

That is of course an exaggeration. But about 90% of our support is defence equipment. Without weapons Ukraine will not be able to survive as a free and sovereign nation.

In the beginning we emptied our own stockpiles. We delivered all of our Caesar Howitzers – all of them. We delivered Harpoon missiles and F16's. Now we use the so-called Danish model for defence donations, where we finance the acquisition of defence equipment directly from Ukrainian manufacturers who are incredibly efficient and innovative.

But we also have important programs in the civilian field. Upon the request of president Zelensky Denmark has assumed the patronage of the rebuilding and the recovery city and oblast of Mykolaiv.

Some people are saying that rebuilding and recovery will have to wait until there is peace. Then big conferences will be held to plan discuss what to do. But Ukraine cannot wait for that.

That is why Denmark has been active in Mykolaiv since 2022 and we even have an embassy office there. Things are going well despite the proximity to the frontline. We are not least trying to help enterprises getting back in operation, because that is the biggest wish in Ukraine. Ukrainians want to earn their own money and not be dependent in foreign aid.

The Danish support for Ukraine is not only a matter for the Danish government. Many ordinary Danes work as volunteers, collecting money for humanitarian assistance or to buy vehicles for the armed forces of Ukraine. I am sometimes being asked why Denmark and the Danes are so committed to support Ukraine. The reason is very simple. Danes know that Ukraine's freedom is also our freedom. That is why there is no Ukraine fatigue in Denmark after three years of Russian aggression.

The award is also a recognition of the entire Danish-Ukrainian embassy team, who are working tirelessly to support Ukraine's resilience and fighting power in wartime conditions. It does not matter whether you are a cleaning lady, a driver or a diplomat. All are equally important to deliver

good results. So warm thanks to the embassy team, including my assistant Nataliia, who keeps me very busy and my housekeeper Svitlana who keeps me alive.

Finally, I wish to thank my wife Anne-Marie, who is not here tonight. Because for security reasons we cannot have our spouses here. But without her strong moral and emotional support on the distance I would not have been able to continue my mission here for three years during the full-scale Russian